The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) A chimeric Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) replicon comprising at least two HCV regions, wherein the regions are from different HCV strains and wherein at least one of the regions is a HCV-1a 3' UTR.

20. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 19, wherein at least one of said regions consists of a non-structural region from a clinical isolate of HCV.

21. (Currently Amended) A chimeric HCV replicon consisting of ~~either a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 1 or~~ a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said ~~modified version of SEQ ID NO: 1 contains SEQ ID NO: 1 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate of HCV and~~ said modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2 contains SEQ ID NO: 2 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate of HCV.

22. – 27. (cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 19, wherein said chimeric replicon comprises a beta-lactamase reporter.

29. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 28, wherein said replicon does not contain a sequence coding for resistance to an agent that inhibits cell growth.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 20, wherein the non-structural region comprises a HCV polypeptide selected from the group consisting of NS2/3 protease, NS3 protease, NS3 helicase, and NS5B polymerase.

32. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 31, wherein the HCV polypeptide is NS5B.

33. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 20, wherein said chimeric replicon comprises a beta-lactamase reporter.

34. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 33, wherein said replicon does not contain a sequence coding for resistance to an agent that inhibits cell growth.

35. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 20, wherein said replicon comprises restriction sites not present in naturally occurring HCV that are located about 3' and about 5' from an HCV target region, wherein said restriction sites do not affect replicon activity.

36. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 35, wherein said restriction sites are silent with respect to amino acid coding.

37. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 35, wherein said chimeric replicon comprises a beta-lactamase reporter.

38. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 37, wherein said replicon does not contain a sequence coding for resistance to an agent that inhibits cell growth.

39. (Currently Amended) A chimeric HCV replicon of ~~SEQ ID NOs: 1 or~~ SEQ ID NO:2, wherein at least a portion of nucleotides encoding a non-structural HCV polypeptide is replaced by a corresponding portion of nucleotides from a clinical isolate of HCV.

40. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 39, wherein the non-structural HCV polypeptide is selected from the group consisting of NS2/3 protease, NS3 protease, NS3 helicase, and NS5B polymerase.

41. (Previously Presented) The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 40, wherein the non-structural HCV polypeptide is NS5B.

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Currently Amended) A chimeric HCV replicon consisting of ~~SEQ ID NOs:1 or~~ SEQ ID NO:2.